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# YOUR MOTIVATION AND BUSINESS LEADERSHIP[1/]

Basic to effective supervision is an understanding of human motivation. Attention will be given here first to theories of motivation and then to the means and value of applying knowledge of human motivation in the supervisory situation.

## Motivation

The material presented here is adapted from concepts included in Motivation and Personality by A. H. Maslow (1954) and in Principles of Leadership and Management (1954), Air Science 4, Volume II, Air University, Montgomery, Alabama.

Theories of motivation range from those which propose that all human behavior stems from a single need (Freud--the sex need, Adler--the need to feel important) to theories which present as many as 100 or more needs underlying human motivation. One theory, which avoids the simplification of the former theories and the complexity of the latter, is presented by Maslow and adapted for Air Force use in the manual cited above. Understanding of this theory may be helpful to the administrator in his supervisory relationships, in his relationships with others in the business organization, and in his personal life as well.

Two prefatory suggestions seem warranted. First, for purposes of clarity in explanation, the theory is presented in oversimplified categories. In actuality, these classifications overlap. Motivation is a complex and dynamic phenomenon which cannot be easily reduced to summary form. Second, understanding of motivation comes first of all through an examination of one's own motivation; only then can the individual attempt to understand the motivation of others. Therefore, in beginning the study and discussion of Maslow's "dynamic theory of human motivation," the individual should think about himself and his own motivation, not about "motivating" other people.

The Maslow-Air Force theory presents as one of its basic hypotheses the following:

Almost all human needs can be classified under five headings, a continum of needs ranging from basic physical needs to more human and social needs.

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These five needs are:

PHYSICAL ⟷ SOCIAL AND HUMAN

| Survival Needs | Security Needs | Belongingness and Love Needs | Esteem Needs | Self-Realization Needs |
|---|---|---|---|---|

Survival Needs

Survival needs are the most easily seen and understood motivations. They are concerned with the physiological needs of the human animal, such as thirst and hunger. So long as these needs go unsatisfied, the individual is little concerned with other needs. His energies and thoughts are directed toward the satisfaction of survival needs to the exclusion of other needs. In modern American society, however, the individual generally takes for granted the satisfaction of his survival needs and is hardly aware of them.

Security Needs

Once the individual's basic physiological needs are satisfied to at least a minimum degree, his dominant needs become security needs (called safety needs by Maslow). His efforts are directed toward satisfaction in this area. Security needs are concerned not only with physical safety but also with things such as economic security (job tenure, insurance, savings, and pensions). The common tendency to prefer the familiar and to look upon change with skepticism are manifestations of security needs. Here again, however, most Americans are relatively unaware of their security needs because many of them are adequately met.

Belongingness and Love Needs

When the individual has minimum satisfaction of his survival and security needs, belongingness and love needs become most important to him. These are the needs for love, acceptance, and approval by others. Belongingness and love needs have two aspects: "inside" and "outside", or internal and external. The internal aspect is the individual's desire to be loved and accepted by a small, intimate group--his family and a few very close friends. The external aspect is the individual's need for acceptance by persons outside this small intimate group--those with whom he works and those in social groups to which he belongs. Belongingness and love needs might be considered critical in the United States (and elsewhere) because the majority of personality problems appear to rise from lack of satisfaction of these needs.

Esteem Needs

The individual whose survival, security, and belongingness needs are satisfied in at least minimum fashion then becomes concerned with esteem needs--the need for recognition and status. Although esteem needs are related to belongingness needs, the latter are more or less passive;

esteem needs involve the favorable reactions of others. Like belongingness needs, esteem needs have an external and an internal aspect. The external aspect is the individual's need for the respect and recognition of others; the internal aspect is the individual's desire for self-respect or self-esteem.

Self-Realization Needs

If the survival, security, belongingness and love, and esteem needs are all satisfied to at least a minimum degree, the individual's dominant need becomes self-realization (called self-actualization by Maslow). This need is directed toward the individual's self-fulfillment, his desire to become his best self, to realize his capabilities to the fullest.

In the Maslow-Air Force theory, three additional hypotheses stem from the above five categories of needs and their relative priority. These hypotheses are:

1. The five needs come into an individual's consciousness and demand satisfaction according to the following priority: a) survival needs, b) security needs, c) belongingness and love needs, d) esteem needs, and finally e) self-realization needs. For example, an individual is not concerned with nor can he be appealed to in terms of esteem needs until he has minimum and continuing satisfaction of his survival, security, and belongingness and love needs.

2. At any given time in an individual's life, all five needs are present, but one need is dominant or most powerful. The individual's first unsatisfied need in the order of relative priority (see 1. above) becomes his dominant need.

3. A critical change in the individual, in the external situation in which he finds himself, or in both may cause a shift in either direction in that individual's dominant need.

According to the Maslow-Air Force theory, all five of the above needs are always present in the individual. He directs his behavior toward satisfying the need that is dominant at any given time. Though an individual's behavior may not seem logical to an observer, that behavior has a cause (the dominant need of the individual) and a goal or purpose (the satisfaction of that need). The term motivation therefore refers to a dynamic process: the needs of the individual, his behavior, the goals toward which his behavior is directed, and the energy released in the individual for the accomplishment of those goals. The energy of the individual increases with the intensity of his needs.

In considering this theory, it is important to remember that these five needs merge into each other and that there is no clear line of demarcation between them. The individual's dominant need may change within a relatively short period of time, and he may be motivated by different

needs in different situations of his daily life (at home, on the job, with social groups). The individual's behavior generally gains at least partial satisfaction of more than one need at a time. It is therefore not easy to determine from the behavior of an individual what his dominant need is. The fact that many basic needs are present in the individual (even though only one is dominant at any one time) and the fact that all of these needs influence the behavior of the individual constitute an explanation of the complex and dynamic nature of human motivation and of the resultant behavior.

## Individual Behavior and the Supervisor

In the previous discussion, attention has been focused on the individual and his basic needs. The individual's behavior is directed toward the satisfaction of these basic needs. It reflects his attempt to cope with the situation in which he finds himself (for purposes of this study, the work situation) in order to reach his goals. In any given situation, therefore, the behavior of an individual is determined by:

1. The nature of the individual (his needs and the specific objectives which he thinks will satisfy these needs; his attitudes, interests, aptitudes and skills).

2. The situation (the circumstances, people and material things with which he must deal in trying to reach his goals).

3. The individual's perception of the situation (which may be different from others' perception of the situation and from the situation as it actually is). The individual's perception of the situation may be colored by his past experience, his feelings and emotions, his ideas, notions and beliefs or many other factors.

The behavior of an individual and his interactions with the situation in order to satisfy his needs and goals may be considered a continuing repetition of the following steps:

1. The individual establishes specific objectives (such as a salary raise, title change, recognition for specific activity, etc.) which will, in the opinion of the individual, help satisfy one or more of his basic needs.

2. The individual resorts to activity or behavior: a) to utilize those factors in the situation (people and things) which, in the opinion of the individual, will help him achieve the specific objective or b) to avoid, modify or remove obstacles to the attainment of the objective.

3. a) If the objective is attained and satisfaction results, the individual establishes new objectives to satisfy basic needs.
   b) If the objective is attained but the individual finds the achievement of the objective does not really satisfy the need

he thought it would, frustration results and the individual establishes new objectives.

c) If the objective is not attained, the individual may:
   1) Find new ways to get help in attaining the objective or to avoid obstacles which stand in the way.
   2) Establish a new objective.
   3) Continue to use the same behavior to attain his objective even though experience shows such behavior to be inadequate or inappropriate.

It should be noted that no person is ever satisfied for long. As soon as specific objectives are attained, new objectives are established. What each individual strives for, therefore, is continuous activity which is rewarding as an end in itself or for results it obtains in satisfying basic needs.

In the supervisory situation the subordinate is striving continually to reach his personal goals, the supervisor is striving to attain his personal goals, and at the same time the goals of the organization must be met. To the extent that the personal goals of the individuals involved are being satisfied (at least in part) by activity directed toward the organizational goals, the behavior of the individuals will tend to benefit the organization. If, however, the organizational goals demand behavior of the individuals which is contrary to or inconsistent with attainment of their personal goals, the organizational goals will normally suffer.

To each individual, his own behavior is logical. Whether or not he is conscious of his needs, the subordinate's behavior is caused by basic needs and is directed toward the goal of satisfying these needs. The supervisor's relationship with his subordinates is influenced by his own behavior, his activity to satisfy his own needs. Moreover, the supervisor is an important part of the situation within which the subordinate must try to reach his goals. Not only is the supervisor one of the people with whom the subordinate must deal, but also the supervisor has considerable influence over the other people and the resources or material things in the subordinate's work situation.

In light of these factors, how can the supervisor, through his own behavior, affect the behavior of his subordinates in order to bring their activities closer to that which will satisfy the goals of the organization as he sees them? Factors which enter into a change in an individual's behavior are:

1. Change in the situation: The supervisor can change the situation in which the subordinate operates. The supervisor, through a change in his own behavior, through encouraging changes in other people, or through changing resources or condtions of the work situation, may affect the behavior of his subordinates.

2. Change in the individual's perception of the situation: The supervisor can change the way his subordinate perceives the work situation by communicating necessary knowledge about the job to be done, by seeing that the subordinates are informed on as much as possible of company objectives, problems and other matters of interest to them, by asking the subordinates to assist in setting realistic standards of performance, and by showing the relationship of job performance to the subordinates' own goals.

3. Change in the individual's skills: A change in the individual's skills will enable him to do things which he could not do prior to the acquisition of this skill. Also because of acquisition of new or greater skills, the subordinate has new tools to use in dealing with the situation confronting him and as a result may have a changed view of himself and/or the situation. On-the-job coaching and other opportunities for developing skills and abilities can help a subordinate in the attainment of both his own and organizational goals.

4. Change in the individual's objectives: In an attempt to satisfy basic needs, an individual may set specific objectives which are not attainable or behave in ways which defeat his own purposes. The supervisor can help an individual to set realistic goals and to take steps necessary to attain them.

In summary, an awareness of motivation theory can help the supervisor bring to the supervisory situation (or any interpersonal relationship) an understanding of some of the factors which underly his own behavior and that of his subordinates. This motivation theory is not an easily applied tool or cure-all for problems in human relations, but understanding of such theory can help to prevent or solve some of the difficult supervisory situations which may arise in the course of striving for the goals of the organization. Some of these concepts will be dealt with further in the sections on Group Behavior and Decision-Making and Organizational Morale.

A real note of warning should be made here. Use of the knowledge of human behavior to manipulate others to one's own ends raises questions which are both ethical and practical in nature. Even if morally justified (and this is questionable), from a practical viewpoint manipulation of others will frequently boomerang as the individual becomes aware that h is being used primarily to serve ulterior purposes of another.